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ABSTRACT

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, a national plan was developed to guide educational activities in Nepal. With assistance from the United States Agency for International Development, the Nepalese government delineated guidelines for a cooperative program with a U.S. university that would provide practically oriented formal academic training for planners and managers of Nepalese educational agencies. The University of Connecticut's proposal, which was accepted, incorporates three major features: 1) an initial analysis of the job responsibilities of each Nepalese participant, 2) design of an individual course of study for each participant that reflects his training objectives and job responsibilities, and 3) design and implementation of a special work-related project endorsed by the participant's superiors in Nepal and executed with the help of University of Connecticut professors. Participants in the "Education Skills Training Project--Nepal" project completed their job analyses and the initial planning of their work-related projects while still in Nepal, prior to coming to the U.S. Another facet of the project is a series of workshops for administrative and technical personnel to be conducted each year in Nepal by University of Connecticut professors. (JG)

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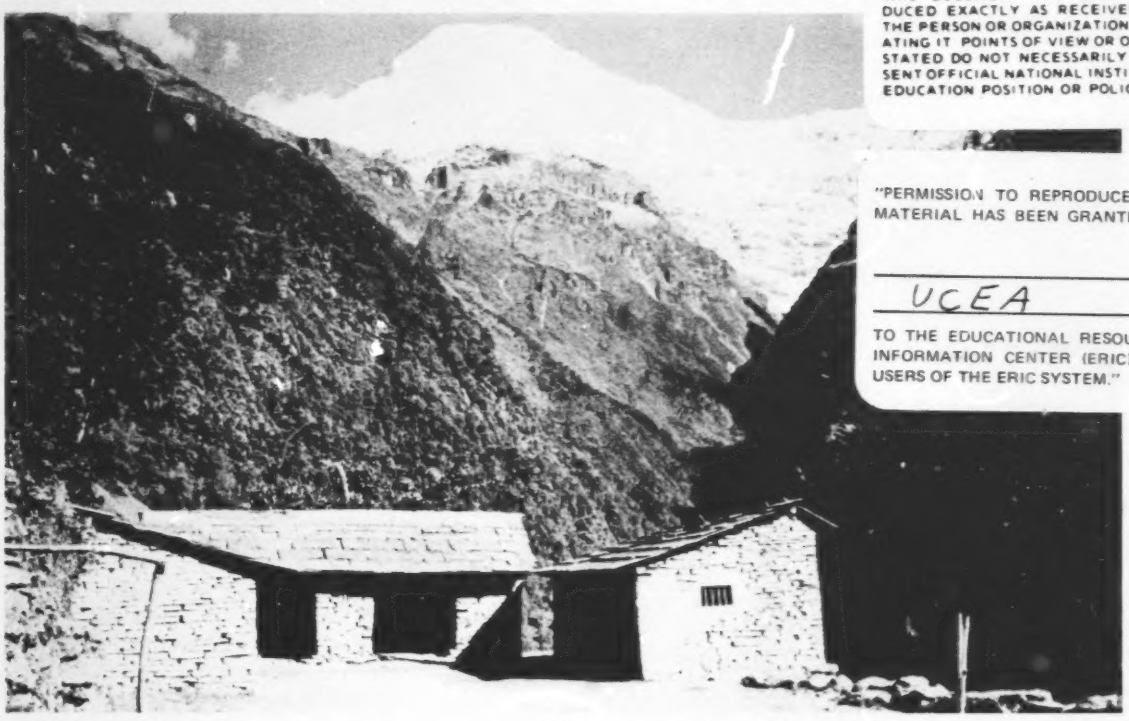

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Skill Development for Nepal
(or What Can an American University Provide a Himalayan Kingdom?)

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Introduction

Nepal, like many other third world countries, is actively pursuing programs of social and economic development; national planners consider the key ingredients for this development to be financial resources, physical materials, skilled manpower, and efficient administration.[1] As in other countries, these resources are scarce for a number of reasons. Located between India and Tibet, Nepal's almost complete isolation from the rest of the world geographically, and politically by choice until 1951, undoubtedly contributed to her present circumstances.

Partly in order to meet national manpower needs and partly in order to meet the demands of her 12 million people, formal educational activities increased greatly after 1951. The number of primary schools in the country grew from 321 in 1950, to 3,531 in 1961, to over 8,000 schools during 1974.[2] The number of secondary schools also increased from 11 in 1951, to 156 in 1961 and over 1,000 by 1970.[3] In addition, a university was established, a national curriculum development center created, and planning for educational development increasingly was systematized and aimed at supporting national development plans, such as the present 5 year plan.[4] During this period the number of students in primary and secondary schools increased from 10,000 in 1951 to 551,800 in 1970, and from 250 to 17,200 in institutions of higher learning.[5]

Even with such increased activity in education, skilled manpower is still at a premium in Nepal. There are shortages of medical doctors, nurses, engineers, agriculturalists, foresters, surveyors, as well as other types of "middle-level" and "higher level" manpower.[6] More and more the education system is being asked to supply such manpower, but the education system itself lacks skilled persons needed to help it function at required levels.

Although Nepal has had national high school leaving examinations for a number of years and introduced admission tests for her colleges,[7] only one or two persons are trained in test construction. While a general concern exists about how to finance educational expansion, there is not the expertise necessary to carry out the economic and related analyses required for sound educational planning.[8]

Although the country's educational leaders are aware of the need for trained manpower and are diverting scarce resources to help ensure that the needs

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Planning the Program *(H.H. Sheathelm and T. Neupane)*

for skilled manpower are met, the entire country has — perhaps — one person with some formal training in manpower planning, and although there is a need for the development of new programs to meet both the unique cultural and topographical conditions of Nepal, only a few persons within the country have the background to plan, develop, and evaluate new programs and procedures. The effects of shortages such as these are compounded by a general lack of trained educational administrators within the country.[9]

Such technical and administrative shortages seem to be reflected in Nepal and other Asian countries by performance gaps between plans and achievements, communications gaps between policy formation processes and implementation machinery, by an apparently restricted capacity to respond to new tasks without a sense of crisis, and by a frequent preoccupation with procedures at the expense of task objectives.[10] The situation is further complicated by the fact that individuals once trained and competent in specific specializations seek assignments in the central government in the capital of Kathmandu rather than return to the isolation of rural Nepal. Yet it is rural Nepal where most of the Nepalese subsist and where many of the manpower needs exist.

Education Skills Project - Nepal

During the end of the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s, under the leadership of the then Crown Prince Birendra, a national plan was developed to guide educational activities within the country. One goal of this "National Education System Plan for 1971-76," particularly relevant to the present discussion, was:

> to develop, preserve, expand and extend such learning, science, technology and skill as may be necessary for the development of the country and to produce a cadre of able workers who can shoulder responsibilities in every development sector.[11]

Such a goal indicated that in the awareness of Napalese policymakers the achievement of the national goals was dependent upon skilled manpower. Moreover, the goals and objectives of the "National Education System Plan 1971-76" were extended into 1976-1980, a situation which indicated a realization that there is a continuing need for skilled manpower for the development of Nepal.

At present, the Institute of Education at Tribhuvan University is primarily concerned with the preparation of teachers for the primary, lower secondary, and secondary schools of Nepal. Advanced training for technical positions in the educational system takes place, for the most part, in foreign colleges and universities in countries such as India, Russia, Great Britain and the United States. Often such training occurs after an educator has shown promise by his or her previous academic efforts and after service in a teaching position or in the Ministry of Education.

As the Nepalese government worked to meet the goals of its National Education System Plan, the leadership of the Ministry of Education realized that there was a need to provide a training program for Nepalese educators in positions which require additional administrative and technical skills. With assistance from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) they delineated guidelines by which universities could submit proposals to assist His Majesty's Government (HMG) with such a venture. The University of Connecticut's proposal which was ultimately accepted was designed by professors from the Institute of Public Service with fifteen years of experience in providing mid-career programs for third world countries and from the Department of Educational Administration in the School of Education.

In response to those Guidelines, the University of Connecticut's proposal addressed:

> the lack of skilled educational manpower with which HMG of Nepal can develop cost-effective quality education in rural areas in accordance with the National Education System Plan. A corollary problem . . . is the effective mobilization of skilled manpower to effect needed changes in the educational system.[12]

The goal was to "improve rural education through applied training and follow-up assistance for educational personnel of His Majesty's Government".[13] However, after the University of Connecticut's proposal was accepted, the primary goal, at least for the initial year of the five year project, was changed by USAID and HMG to the corollary problem, formal academic training and practical application to planners and managers of the Ministry of Education, Institute of Education, and National Planning Commission. This was evident by the fact that all members of the first group of Nepalese participants held administrative and technical positions in those institutions.

Achievement of that goal was to be measured in several ways:[14] →

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1. Completion of the Master of Arts degree in Education by 20 Nepalese educators.
2. Development and completion by each participating Nepalese educator of one work-related project for improving the quality of education *or* for expanding cost effective education in Nepal. (All projects must be consistent with the direction of the National Education System Plan).
3. Completion, for each participant, of a validated job task statement which identifies his/her major duties and learning objectives.
4. Demonstration of the ability by Nepalese participants to perform their previously designated job tasks more effectively and/or efficiently under specified working conditions.

The *Education Skills Training Project - Nepal* of the University of Connecticut is marked by several important features: an approach for linkage of learning and application, its participatory design, and its training methods and content. [15]

Linkage of Learning and Application. The training program to be implemented by the University of Connecticut consultants has three major features — (a) job task analysis, (b) training based on that analysis, and (c) work by participants on projects to be implemented on the job.

a. Initially there is an analysis of the job responsibilities of each Nepalese to be trained, e.g., the conditions and skills required to fulfill those responsibilities. Then learning objectives are set on the basis of which content and methods of instruction are later selected for each participant.
b. Participants then choose from existing courses, workshops and seminars those which address their learning objectives, and one or more special courses established to address those learning objectives not covered by regular course work. A Nepal Core Seminar was also designed and is conducted by a faculty member with extensive educational experience in Nepal. Its purpose is to help participants relate their learning at the University of Connecticut to actual conditions in Nepal.
c. The relevance and value of training is increased by participants working with faculty assistance on work-related projects. The projects designed by the participants are endorsed by their superiors in Nepal. Moreover, the projects are aimed at providing information and strategies to help implement aspects of the National Education System Plan. University of Connecticut professors will assist the Nepalese participants implement their projects after they have returned to their jobs in the Ministry of Education and other participating Nepalese agencies. Such assistance will be provided by the professors when they travel to Nepal to screen the next group of participants.

The Nepalese participants completed the job analysis and the initial planning for their work-related projects prior to coming to the United States, while still working in Nepal.

Participatory Design. Throughout the *Education Skills Training Project - Nepal,* the selected Nepalese participants, their superiors in the Ministry of Education and USAID representatives work together on the design and content of the training program. Following the approach as outlined under Linkage of Learning and Application above, a learning agreement is developed between each participant and a University professor. That agreement is periodically reviewed in order to measure progress toward each participant's stated objectives, to identify needed changes in the program of study, and to review progress on the work-related project.

Likewise the basic overall *Education Skills Project - Nepal* will be reviewed and evaluated annually by representatives from HMG and USAID.

Training Methods and Content. An array of academic courses, workshops, and seminars in planning, management and education is offered by the Institute of Public Service and the School of Education. Wherever possible, classwork involves practice, case analysis, simulation and the aforementioned work-related projects. Participants are also placed in operating agencies for practical field attachments. For example, one participant who is in the Examination Division of the Ministry of Education and has planned a project around the development of nationwide testing, will attend a special program at the Educational Testing Service in Princeton, New Jersey. Follow-up assistance is offered to all participants who are attempting to apply their learning to their work.

Planning Conference at the University of Connecticut *(Left to right — R.K. Joshi, Mark Shibles, T.B. Manandhar, and T. Jones)*

Another facet of the overall project is a series of workshops which will be conducted each year in Nepal and are designed to provide training for administrative and technical personnel in areas deemed important for the implementation of the National Education System Plan. The content of these workshops is determined →

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jointly by officials in the Ministry of Education and the University of Connecticut professors selected to conduct the workshops. By providing University of Connecticut professors direct exposure to conditions in Nepal, these experiences help ensure that the training methods and content of the project provided in the U.S.A. are relevant.

Case Study

One of the Nepalese participants is currently an Under Secretary of the Ministry of Education — a position directly responsibile to the Joint Secretary and one level removed from the Minister of Education. He is a graduate of Patna University in India with a B.A. degree, holds an M.A. in economics from Benares Hindu University, and has done additional graduate work in economics at Manchester University in the United Kingdom. After teaching in a Nepalese high school for three years, he became a section officer in the Ministry of Education for a brief period. Then he was assigned to a lectureship in a Nepalese college for twelve years. For the last six years he has been Under Secretary of the Planning Division — the position to which he will in all probability return.

When he studied his position through the Job Task Analysis, he envisioned that he must develop expertise in educational economics, educational planning, and manpower planning. The job-related purpose for which he desires training is "to prepare economically efficient educational programmes and to ensure maximum returns from investments in education." [16] He furthermore delineated six functions which he would have to perform. [17]

1. To project costs of the educational programmes
2. To analyze economic feasibility of educational projects
3. To analyze the impact of demographic factors on educational costs
4. To project manpower requirements for educational projects
5. To study the role of education in promoting national development
6. To study the progress of technical and vocational education in the country

In his job analysis each function was further broken down into tasks, how each task was to be accomplished, and what competencies were required for successful performance.

The job analysis was also related to the goals of the National Education System Plan by the participant:

> With the introduction of the National Education System Plan, the Nepalese education system has undergone profound changes in its structure, content, and objectives. The government's responsibility in terms of supply of textbooks and materials, payment of teachers' salaries, and support of higher education has increased tremendously. About 11% of the government budget is now being devoted for educational purposes. New demands are being made on government exchequer for financing a variety of new educational activities, and expansion of the existing ones. An educational economist in the Ministry of Education would be able to assess the financial implications of the new educational proposals. He could contribute to the framing of educational plans and programmes by presenting analyses of demands for education of various levels. He would help in surveying the present sources of educational finance and exploring new ones. His role in the study of the economic efficiency of the educational system and its parts is also important. [18]

The work-related project that this Under Secretary selected, was "to study the implications of population growth for educational planning in Nepal." [19] That project is currently to be broken down into more specific activities. As the scope of this participant's program is considered, it must be remembered that the mission, job analysis, and work-related project were agreed to by the Joint Secretary.

The program of study leading to an M.A. in Education at the University of Connecticut which was designed by the participant and faculty advisors to meet the requirements of his job and project is shown below.

Course	Department	Credits
Nepal Core Seminar	Educ. Admin.	9
Public Management Development	Inst. Pub. Service	6
Educational Planning	Educ. Admin.	3
Economics of Education	Educ. Admin.	3
Public School Finance	Educ. Admin.	3
Economic Development	Economics	3
Demography	Sociology	3
Quantitative Methods in Educational Research	Educ. Psychology	3
Investigation of Special Topics	Educ. Admin.	3
Practicum	Educ. Admin.	3
Independent Study: Vocational Education and Manpower Planning	Higher, Technical and Adult Education	3

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Summary

The overall thrust of the *Education Skills Project - Nepal* is to assist a third world country develop competent manpower. When a university professor has travelled to Nepal, worked with Nepalese officials and the Nepalese participants themselves, and the project actually becomes alive at the University, he quickly realizes that assistance is also being provided the University, its professoriate, and, in the long run, the people of Connecticut by the people of Nepal. Thus an international dimension is added which develops and enriches Man's humanity to Man. □

Editor's Note: As this project unfolds, the UCEA Review will present progress reports.

FOOTNOTES

1. *Nepal: The Fifth Plan (1975-80) in Brief* (Kathmandu: National Planning Commission, His Majesty's Government, 1975), p. 31.
2. Krishna Raj Aryal, *Education for the Development of Nepal* (Kathmandu Shanti Prakashan, 1970), p. 39; T.M. Sakya, "National Education System Plan: A Retrospective View," in Thakur M. Sakya and Prem K. Kasaju, eds., *Education and Development* (Kathmandu: National Education Committee, 1977), p. 7.
3. *The National Education System Plan for 1971-76.* Kathmandu: Ministry of Education, His Majesty's Government of Nepal, 1971, p. 3.
4. *Nepal: The Fifth Plan,* opt. cit.
5. *The National Plan,* p. 3.
6. Harka Gurung, "Manpower Needs and the Education Plan," in Mohammad Mohsin and Prem Kasaju, eds., *Education and Development,* (Kathmandu: National Education Committee, 1975).
7. Prem K. Kasaju, "On Admission Tests," in Sakya and Kasaju, pp. 89-102.
8. *Project Paper: Education Skills Training Project* (Kathmandu: United States Agency for International Development, May 1976), p.5.
9. Kedar Nath Shrestha, "Educational Administration in Nepal: A View," in Moshin and Kasaju, p. 27.
10. Raja Roy Singh and A.W.P. Guruge, "Administration of Education in the Asian Region," *Prospects* 7, 1 (1977) :118.
11. *The National Plan,* p.8.
12. *Technical Proposal: Education Skills Training Nepal* (Submitted by Institute of Public Service and School of Education, University of Connecticut, September 1976), p. 7.
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
16. Job-Task Analysis completed by T.B. Manandhar in Nepal during February, 1977.
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Ibid.*